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## OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch  
Superintendent

September - 2008

### CHANGING TIMES FOR ACCREDITATION DIVISION

The Accreditation Division staff of the Office of Public Instruction wants to take this opportunity to review some major changes in the structure and staffing of the division and how those changes will be impacting the services the division provides to Montana districts and schools.

#### STAFFING AND ORGANIZATION

**Division Administrator:** Linda Peterson

**Curriculum Unit:** Manager – Michael Hall

Content area specialists:

- Math – Jean Howard
- Science – Katherine Burke
- Middle School/At Risk – Kim Warrick
- Library Media – Colet Bartow
- Early Childhood – Vacant
- Communication Arts – Vacant

Other unit responsibilities:

- Gifted and Talented – Advanced Placement Specialist – Kathy Mollohan
- ESEA Title II part D – Technology Grants – Michael Hall

**Accreditation Unit:** Manager – Al Mc Milin

Accreditation specialists:

- Full time – Dale Kimmet
- Part time – Vacant
- Data Specialist – Karen Crogan

Other unit responsibilities:

- Five Year Comprehensive Education Plan Process Specialist – William Schauman
- Learn and Serve Coordinator – Mary Ellen Earnhardt
- Character Ed Specialist – Vacant
- ESEA Title II Part A – State Level Activities – Al Mc Milin
- ESEA Title II Part B – Math and Science Partnership Grants – Al Mc Milin

*"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."*

## **INCREASING SERVICES TO DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS**

### **Standards Revision and Implementation**

- Curriculum specialists will be facilitating the review and revision of our content and performance standards. Following the adoption of the new revised standards by the Board of Public Education, the specialists will be:
  - ✓ providing in-service for educators on the changes in the standards and the impact those changes will have on instruction;
  - ✓ facilitating the development of model curriculums to assist local districts in aligning their curriculum to the new revised standards; and
  - ✓ serving as ongoing resource persons in the various content areas.
- The science, library and technology standards have been the first areas to be undergo this review and revision process. The new revised standards can be seen by clicking on the link below. Professional development for teachers and administrators will begin in September 2008.

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Accred/cStandards.html>

### **Accreditation Process**

- A critical mission of our division is the ongoing assistance to, and monitoring of districts and schools as they work to meet the expectations of the Montana Accreditation Standards. The Accreditation Standards and Procedures Manual can be seen by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Accred/standards.html>

- Based upon a review of the information provided by districts and schools through the Annual Data Collection, OPI accreditation specialists make a determination as to the recommended accreditation status for each school in Montana. Appendix E of the manual provides an overview of the process, time line and criteria for each level of accreditation status – Regular, Advice, Deficiency or Nonaccredited.
- Schools receiving advice or deficiency status must submit an improvement plan to correct the deviations. A requirement of No Child Left Behind now mandates that any school with a misassigned teacher, even if they do not have an advice or deficiency status, must submit an improvement plan as well outlining how they will be correcting the misassignment.
- Throughout the process accreditation specialists work with districts and schools to find remedies when a deviation is noted. This past year a new set of response options was added for use with schools with continuing serious deviations. Once these options are exhausted a recommendation is made to the state superintendent to request the Board of Public Education to request the district administrator and school board chairman to appear before them as provided for in Appendix E. These additional assistance options include:
  - ✓ For schools with ineffective or missing corrective plans and continuing serious deviations from accreditation standards, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will conduct an on-site visit to review and reinforce needed corrective actions.
  - ✓ For schools completing a major building construction project, OPI will follow-up in the fall to see if deviations are corrected as a result of the reconfiguration and expansion of the system.

- ✓ For a school's first year of using a non-licensed teacher, a letter will be sent from the state superintendent's office emphasizing the serious consequences should the district continue to use non-licensed teachers(s).
  - ✓ For a school that has consecutive years of using non-licensed teacher, the school administrator and the chairperson of the board will be required to appear before the Board of Public Education.
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- Over the next year the division will be redesigning and initiating the past practice of visiting all school districts every five years. While the visits will have monitoring and technical assistance components, they will also allow staff to identify and catalogue the many "best practices" in use around our state.
  - Another goal of the division will be to facilitate a review of Chapter 55 which provides for the basic accreditation philosophy and guidelines provided for by the Board of Public Education. This review is done periodically to insure the guidelines are kept current.

The Accreditation Division looks forward to the many opportunities and challenges resulting from these changes. Most importantly, though, is the opportunity to better serve the districts, schools, educators and students of Montana.